CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 8 JULY 1991 FROM THE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A STATEMENT DELIVERED ON 25 JUNE 1991, BY AMBASSADOR DAVID J. SMITH, CHIEF UNITED STATES NEGOTIATOR FOR THE DEFENSE AND SPACE TALKS, IN THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

I have the honour to forward to you the attached Statement to the Outer Space Committee of the Conference on Disarmament, delivered on 25 June 1991, by Ambassador David J. Smith, Chief United States Negotiator for the Defense and Space Talks.

I request that you take the appropriate steps to register this Statement as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and to have it distributed to all member delegations and non-member States participating in the work of the Conference.

(Signed) M. Lyall Breckon
Deputy Representative of the
United States of America to
the Conference on Disarmament

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Statement to the Outer Space Committee
of the Conference on Disarmament
25 June 1991

by

Ambassador David J. Smith
Chief United States Negotiator
for the Defense and Space Talks

Mr. Chairman,

I

When I last had the privilege of addressing the Conference on Disarmament on the status of the Defense and Space Talks, I began by stressing President George Bush's words of 7 February 1990: "In the 1990s, strategic defenses make more sense than ever before." I begin this way again today because so many of the events of the 16 months since those words were spoken have proven them all the more valid.

The President was speaking at the mid-point of a two-year review of the United States Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) at a time when many rapid changes were occurring in the world. These changes diminished our concern over the possibility of a strategic first strike with ballistic missiles against the United States relative to our growing concern over ballistic missile proliferation and accidental or unauthorized launches. Therefore, in his 29 January 1991, State of the Union Address, President Bush ordered redirection of the SDI programme to "protection from limited ballistic missile strikes, whatever their source".

Though backed by two years of study which began long before anyone imagined there would be a Persian Gulf War, the President's announcement could not be heard but through the thunder of the War. From that perspective, the results of our study and the President's decision were prescient.

President Bush recently summed it all up in a few sentences addressed to the graduating class of the United States Air Force Academy on 29 May 1991:

> "We learned that missile defense works and that it promotes peace and security. In the Gulf we had the technologies of defense to pick up where theories of deterrence left off. The Patriot saved lives and helped keep the coalition together.
>
> And while the Patriot worked well in the Gulf, we must prepare for the missiles more likely to be used by future aggressors. We cannot build a defense system that simply responds to the threats of the past."

II

Despite the overwhelming military force marshalled to enforce United Nations resolutions, notions of deterrence prevented neither the tragic war in the Gulf from starting nor ballistic missiles from being launched. SCUD missiles were fired in the opening days of conflict and targeted at civilian populations. Patriot interceptors defended troops and civilians, and greatly lessened the political terror that the SCUD attacks were designed to spread. The Patriot proved instrumental in containing the conflict, maintaining the international coalition, and possibly shortening the war. And let us not forget the most simple and important fact: the Patriot saved lives.

Yet, had these SCUD missiles been mated with chemical or nuclear warheads, the short-range Patriots could not have intercepted their targets far enough from civilian populations to provide the necessary defence. Far greater human tragedy would have occurred. Further, the SCUD is an old ballistic missile; far more capable missiles have already been developed.

The Patriot originally was designed as a point air defence weapon; it does not have the range, speed and manoeuvrability to intercept more capable, advanced types of ballistic missiles. Its success proved that defensive technology is feasible, but advanced interceptors, much more capable than the Patriot, are required to meet future crises that will involve ever more advanced missile threats.

According to the Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, by the year 2000, in addition to the United States and Soviet Union, more than two dozen countries will have ballistic missiles; 15 of these countries will have the technical capabilities to produce their own missiles; half of these countries will have, or will be developing, nuclear capability. By 2000, 30 countries will have chemical weapons; 10 will be able to field biological weapons. Many of these countries will have ballistic missiles of various ranges; a few could achieve strategic range. In addition, as we saw in the Gulf War, ballistic missiles can be improved to add to their ranges and capabilities.

Such an environment can only be met with a broad, comprehensive strategy which includes political and diplomatic measures as well as defences. The United States is dedicated to strengthening and expanding the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Non-Proliferation Treaty, supporting the work of the Australia Group and advancing President Bush's Middle East arms control proposal. With dedication from all of us, we can expect to build upon the successes these efforts have already achieved. Still, experience and common sense suggest that these efforts alone cannot stop all proliferation. The introduction of modest, effective defences will complement the MTCR and other diplomatic efforts to deter missile proliferation.

III

America's new approach to ballistic missile defence, announced by President Bush on 29 January, is called Global Protection Against Limited Strikes (GPALS). Half the size of the original SDI "Phase I" plan, the GPALS architecture shifts the focus of strategic ballistic missile defence away from deterrence of a strategic ballistic missile attack to protection against the emerging and limited ballistic missile threat. Because it is limited in scope and scale, GPALS will not threaten the Soviet strategic retaliatory capability, an oft-stated Soviet concern over SDI. Therefore, given improving United States-Soviet relations and growing concern for ballistic missile proliferation and accidental and unauthorized launch, GPALS represents an appropriate approach to defences based on the evolving international environment.

A GPALS defence would include various sensors and three ground- and space-based interceptors to ensure global coverage against missiles of all ranges:

- Space- and surface-based sensors to provide global, continuous surveillance and tracking, from launch to intercept, of ballistic missiles of all ranges - theatre to strategic. This is a crucial element for a successful global defence.

- Surface-based, non-nuclear, transportable, kinetic interceptors to protect United States forces deployed abroad and United States allies and friends against ballistic missiles of theatre range.

- Space-based, non-nuclear, kinetic interceptors to provide continuous, global interception capability against missiles with ranges in excess of 500-1,000 km (300-600 miles). Thus, the space-based element will protect the United States, allies and friends against both theatre and strategic missiles and will provide the broadest, most effective global coverage.

- Finally, surface-based, non-nuclear, kinetic interceptors located in the United States to protect the United States from ballistic missiles of all ranges.

IV

Any meaningful deployment of ballistic missile defences will require a change in the legal regime established by the ABM Treaty. Therefore, although the world has changed, and our Program adjusted accordingly, our goal in the Defense and Space Talks remains consistent. We seek to negotiate a cooperative transition to allow increased reliance on strategic ballistic missile defences.

Over the six year history of our Talks, we have explained to our Soviet colleagues that, despite the best of intentions, the ABM Treaty did not yield the stability nor the reductions in strategic offensive arms its framers intended. It is not the ABM Treaty but the improved relationship

between the United States and the Soviet Union that is about to bring us the first ever agreement for stabilizing reductions in strategic offensive forces. Deployment of strategic defences would further enhance stability. We believe this argument is, and will remain, valid.

We also continue to believe that, in concert with reductions in strategic offensive arms, effective defences would greatly reduce any strategic benefits a side might obtain by cheating on international arms reductions agreements. Defences would help deter the proliferation of ballistic missile technology and devalue the potential political and military leverage of ballistic missiles - long thought to be the terror weapons of choice.

The proliferation of ballistic missile technology, underscored by the lessons learned from the Gulf War, confirms our conclusion that the regime established by the ABM Treaty must be changed. Positive changes in United States-Soviet relations, the need to address a truly mutual concern, and a United States ballistic missile defence programme which averts stated Soviet concerns may now provide a real opportunity for success in our negotiations. I stress that a negotiated cooperative transition is our goal. This is why we have been engaged in the Defense and Space Talks for six years and remain committed to their future.

V

The United States continues to offer a mechanism, the United States Defense and Space Treaty, to permit deployment of defences beyond the ABM Treaty following three years' discussion of specific measures for implementing a cooperative transition. Such a process of negotiation and discussion of concrete measures is far preferable to withdrawal from the ABM Treaty under the supreme interests provision found in article XV of that Treaty. The United States approach is measured, reasonable and appropriate.

We also understand full well that the negotiated cooperative transition we seek cannot be built in a vacuum but requires a sound foundation of trust. Therefore, another United States approach in the Defense and Space Talks is ensuring predictability in the development of the United States-Soviet strategic relationship which has up to now been characterized by secrecy. In contrast, openness makes the strategic relationship predictable, averting miscalculation and technological surprise, and thus is stabilizing.

To encourage openness, the United States has proposed a number of predictability measures designed to create a better understanding of strategic ballistic missile defence activities as early as the research stage - years before the appearance of advanced defences in the field. These United States measures include annual exchanges of data, meetings of experts, briefings, visits to laboratories, observations of tests, and ABM test satellite notifications.

As a demonstration of the United States approach and commitment to openness, at the Wyoming Ministerial in September 1989, Secretary of State Baker invited a group of Soviet experts to visit two United States laboratories conducting SDI research. In December 1989, 10 Soviet experts

visited the Alpha Chemical Laser at the TRW facility at San Juan Capistrano, California, and the BEAR Neutral Particle Beam Experiment at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, New Mexico. The Soviet guests saw hardware up close and had an opportunity to ask questions of United States scientists conducting the research.

To continue the momentum, Secretary Baker took further initiatives. In the spring of 1990, the United States proposed that the United States and Soviet Union conclude a free-standing executive agreement on these measures. Later in 1990, the United States proposed pilot implementation of United States predictability measures - a "trial-run". And last fall, the United States proposed that the two sides conduct "dual pilot implementation" - the United States would demonstrate its proposed predictability measures, and the Soviet Union would demonstrate its measures.

The United States remains committed to reciprocal openness in this area which we believe would be inherently stabilizing, consistent with the developing trends in United States-Soviet relations. We also believe that early conclusion of a free-standing predictability measures agreement would afford us the opportunity to build greater trust upon which we could construct even greater successes in the Defense and Space Talks.

VI

With the proliferation of ballistic missile technology growing near Soviet borders, and with our GPALS plan, the United States believes Soviet attitudes should evolve to permit defences against mutual concerns. Although to date there has been no shift in the official Soviet position on the deployment of defences beyond the narrow limits of the ABM Treaty, we continue to see evidence of an internal Soviet discussion over the role of ballistic missile defences. In addition, missile defence is more consistent with the new Soviet emphasis on "defensive doctrine". Thus, incentives exist for the Soviets to join with us to explore constructive measures to counter emerging threats.

The changes in the international environment, the lessons learned from the Gulf War, the improvement in United States-Soviet relations, and the shift to a defensive doctrine in the Soviet Union all should encourage our Soviet colleagues to consider relaxation of ABM Treaty constraints to meet mutual concerns.

There is considerable reason for optimism in the Defense and Space Talks. Here in Geneva, following the signing of the START Treaty, Presidents Bush and Gorbachev, in their June 1990 Washington Joint Summit Statement, committed the United States and USSR to seek an "appropriate relationship between strategic offences and defences". This is a good sign. Soon, the United States and the Soviet Union will begin to construct this new regime that could permit greater reliance on defences. This commitment should enable the sides to build upon improving relations and achieve success in future Defense and Space Talks to deal cooperatively with the evolving international environment.